

in the Synod of Virginia. Mr. Brown was in Nashville on his way to Texas, where his work has been assigned for the next few months.

The Secretary was instructed to express to Mr. Brown Mr. Pratt, and Mr. Coit, the three young men who have been specially engaged in this work during the past year, the Committee's grateful appreciation of their faithful and efficient labors.

Rev. R. T. Coit was authorized to make his arrangements to sail for Korea during the month of January or February, as he might find convenient.

The treasurer reported receipts for the month of December, \$25,349.15, a loss as compared with December, 1907, of \$683.31.

The Committee adjourned to meet on Friday, February 19, following the Laymen's convention to be held in the city of Birmingham, Ala., February, 16 to 18.

S. H. CHESTER, Secy.

Nashville, Tenn., January 5, 1909.

PRAYER.

Our Father in Heaven, Thou art crowning our lives with Thy kindness and mercy. Thy kindness to us is loving kindness and Thy mercy is tender mercy. And yet, like thoughtless and ungrateful children, we often receive Thy richest gifts as a matter of course, and our hearts are not lifted up in joyous thanksgiving. We remember the time of trial and forget the unnumbered blessings that have been showered upon us from Thy bountiful hand. Enable us to cultivate the grateful spirit; help us to see Thy loving hand in all the manifold experiences of life, and to see how all Thy loving kindness finds its highest expression in the gift of Thy Son. As we look into His face and see Thy great love to us, may it awaken a responsive love to thee, and may our gratitude be manifested in lives of consecrated service. Amen.

TRUSTS FROM GOD.

Every burden laid upon us is a compliment from God. An employer does not commit great responsibilities to incompetent workers. The more important the work is, the more careful he is to select only those who can safely represent him in the way they should while carrying that responsibility. So with the affliction and sorrow and business and household cares that are bearing down today upon many of God's children. The Father believes in those to whom he is entrusting such burdens, and he is showing his confidence in their ability to represent him by the way they meet such responsibility. To bear nobly the part he gives them, trusting all the rest to him, that is his charge to each.

His time is like the time of the tide; all the art and power of man can neither hasten nor retard its moment; it must be waited for; nothing can be done without it, and when it comes nothing can resist it. The only reason why the Lord seems to delay what he afterwards grants is that the best hour is not yet come.—John Newton.

Prayer Meeting

Wednesday, January 20.

TOPIC—SELF SACRIFICE..

John 12:24-25.

Self-denial does not mean impoverishment of soul. On the contrary, the principle, wisely applied, produces spiritual enrichment, strengthening and refining every noble faculty of one's nature. Meyer says, "All our outgoings into wider ministry, nobler life, greater responsibility of blessedness, are due to the precious action of sorrow, self-sacrifice and pain. There is no gate into the life, which is life indeed, which has not cost us dear." There is indeed a surrendering, or a repression of that which has been counted dear, but this very surrendering is found to be a process of transmutation of the less fine into the finer metal. It is not a peculiarity of Christian attainment that the higher is reached by rising superior to the lower, or the more precious is secured at the cost of the less; it is a law that pertains to man as man. The higher is rooted and nourished in the decay of the lower. The purest joy flourishes in the atmosphere of self-renunciation.

It is a perfectly familiar fact that mental vigor and alacrity are attained by rising superior to the conventional or superficial thought of earlier years, and that moral integrity is maintained by vigilant warfare against tendencies toward self-indulgence and the many promptings of a self-seeking nature. There is another and higher part of our being that we call spiritual which is yet not apart from the mental and moral, but involves and uses these, and is subject to the same law of growth. Inferior interests and conditions in the spiritual life must yield to the claims of the superior and must be surrendered. The health and robustness of the soul is maintained by the frequent offering up of minor treasures; some of them in a high sense sacred, many of them purely natural. The luxurious Christian is not the strongest nor yet the happiest.

McLaren says: "Religion gives no screen to keep the weather off us, but it gives us an insight into the truth that storms and rain are good for the only crop that is worth growing here." So that it is altogether rational to meet the demands of self-restraint and sacrifice with "the light which never was on sea or land" shining in the soul, and a heart full of love and a song of joy on the lips at the very moment that we are bending to take the cross which infinite wisdom imposes. It was "the joy that was set before him" that impelled the Master to endure the cross, for with him, as with us, it was the way to the crown. The conscious certainty that we are treading an upward path will bring quite assurance at every step and render the faithful one ever stable and serene amidst the changefulness of mere circumstance. If higher purposes are prospered and paths are illumined by a strange, sweet light, the life must be serene, for wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace." If our treasures are stored safe above the cloudland of change or loss, privation of lesser interests will neither perturb or depress the mind. "When thy paths are made low thou shalt say, Up."

After all, then, the life of self-denial is yet one of ever-accumulating gain. Forsaking all and following Christ is the very embodiment of wisdom. Daily confidence in the divine favor, the bestowment of His grace, the light of His smile, the buoyancy of a living hope, an ever enlarging and intensifying perception of spiritual beauty—these are the compensations of those who love not the world, neither the things of the world. And then, "a heaven of endless blessedness and close communion with God is the only possible ending to the facts of the devout life on earth."